



Social Media 101: Tips For Academic Writers



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Social Media For Academic Writers

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How to use social media as an academic writer

Social media has become an influential force in both our personal and professional lives.

According to Mark Carrigan, social media trainer and sociologist at the University of Warwick, social media offers many benefits for academic writers. In a recent TAA webinar entitled, [‘What On Earth Will I Tweet About?’: Feeling Comfortable with Social Media as an Academic](#), Carrigan shared some of those benefits.

“One advantage of social media for academic writers is that it allows you to have an [independent presence online](#) so if you switch institutions, you can still easily be found,” Carrigan said. Since many academics work at multiple educational institutions during their careers, an independent online presence can be an invaluable networking and promotional tool.

“Social media platforms can offer many advantages in both the pre- and post-publication stages of textbooks and journal articles.”

In the prepublication stage, social media can be used to [hash out ideas with colleagues](#). Carrigan suggests that you can explore your thoughts online with others rather than writing things down in a notebook, a process which has the added bonus of helping you find potential collaborators for writing endeavors. Through social media, you can also [find out about conferences](#) relevant to your field and [discover new articles](#) to guide your research. Sites like [Bundlr](#) and [Storify](#) (on pg. 5 and 6) can be used to gather information, such as journal articles or online chatter about conference presentations, into a single location for easy access during the research and writing stages of your project.



Once your paper or book is published, there are many strategies you can use to [publicize your work](#). You can comment about current events that are relevant to your publications and post about any events that you participate in or conferences that you plan to attend. Sharing calls for papers in your field, reviews of books you have recently read, and news about publications from other authors you admire can also help increase your online following and thereby garner more attention for your publications. “Tweet about your new publications,” Carrigan urged. “When you publish something, share it on Twitter so your followers can see it, and if they’re interested, they can then read your work.”

Carrigan's recent book has sold significantly better than his publishers had expected, and he **credits the increase to his occasional tweets** about his work.

Using social media to promote your publications can boost sales.

Carrigan also shared a number of **tips to help maximize the advantages** that social media can offer academic writers:

- **Spread the word.** Let people

know that you're getting involved in social media so you can have an initial follower base comprised of people you already know offline. You can inform people about your online presence by putting your social media information, such as the URL for your blog or your Twitter handle, in your email signature and on your business cards.

- **Make time for social media.** Many academic writers worry that they don't have time to squeeze blogging or tweeting into an already packed schedule, but Carrigan asserts that social media doesn't have to be a time sink. For example, if you just got back from a conference, post your presentation online to share with others, or tweet about the topic you're writing about for an article or book chapter. "Integrate social media into your day-to-day workflow," Carrigan suggests. "Think about what you're already working on so you're not creating an additional demand on your time."

“What gets people enthusiastic about social media in the academy is when they start getting a following and having interesting conversations.”

Types of Social Media



Twitter: a microblogging service in which users can read and send messages of up to 140 characters



Facebook: a social networking website where users create profiles, connect with others, and share comments, pictures, and videos



Google+: a social networking website with an emphasis on information sharing rather than socializing



LinkedIn: a social networking website with a professional focus where users can post information from their CVs, connect with colleagues, and give and receive recommendations based on previous collaborations



Academia.edu: a social networking website especially for academics where users can create profiles, share their papers, and connect with others in the field.

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- **Consider collaborating.** If you're worried you just won't have the time to work with social media on your own, consider contributing to a multi-author blog in your field. That way the site will be more active and it will involve less work for each participant.

- **Don't worry about being "boring."** Many academic writers may worry that their areas of expertise won't pique the interest of the general public, but don't let that deter you from getting involved with social media. Carrigan says, "Your blog might be boring to a lot of people, but it probably will be very interesting to some people. Just go ahead and jump into it."

“ Social media allows people who might be interested to find information easily. ”

Social media offers a forum for academics to expand networking circles, extend collaborative outreach, self-publicize, and broaden research potential.

If you are interested in learning more about how to leverage social media to benefit your career, Carrigan's full presentation is available in [TAA's podcast library](#) and additional resources can be found at the TAA website at TAAonline.net/podcast-library

Social media can have a dramatic positive impact on an academic writer's professional life.

Types of Social Media (continued)



Bundlr: a website that allows users to collect documents and social media content into one bundle



WordPress: an open source content management system and tool for creating personalized websites and blogs



Blogger: a tool for creating blogs where users can choose and customize a template for sharing content



Edublogs: a blogging service specifically for the field of education, where teachers, students, and institutions can create their own blogs

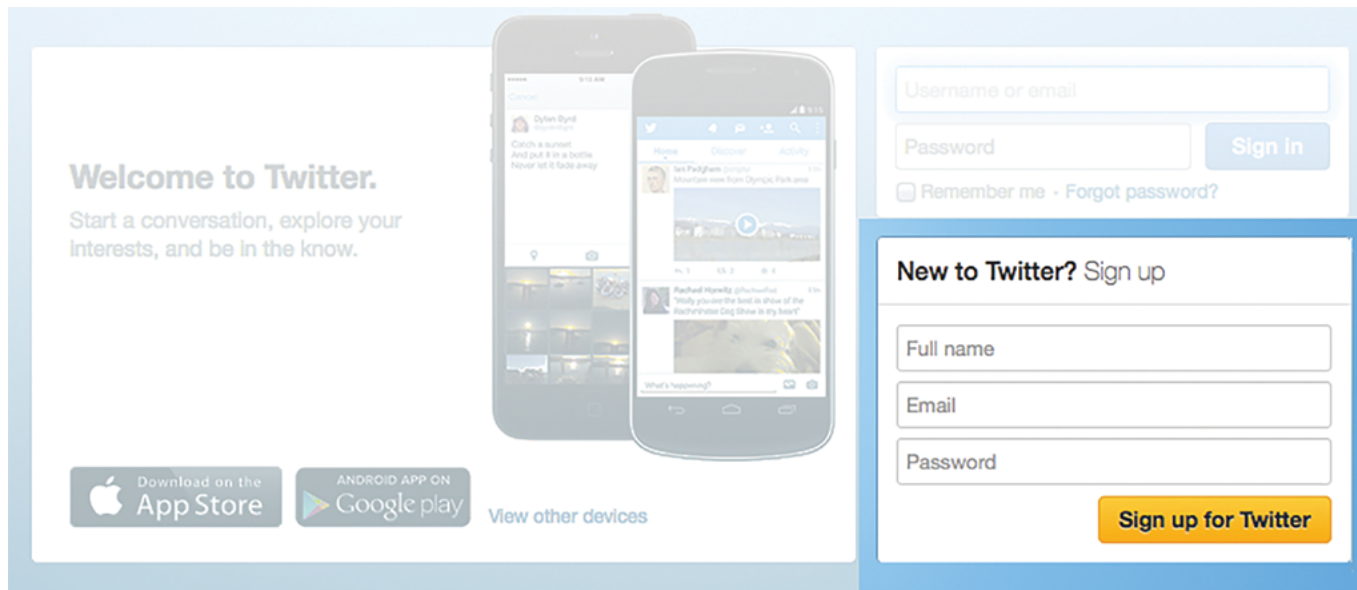


Storify: a website in which users can gather together information posted on social media sites.

Twitter 101: How to create an account, customize your profile, and start tweeting

How to sign up

- 1 Go to <http://twitter.com> and find the 'New to Twitter?' sign up box.

A screenshot of the Twitter website's sign-up page. On the left, there's a 'Welcome to Twitter' section with a motivational quote and app download buttons for the App Store and Google Play. In the center, two smartphones display the Twitter mobile app interface. On the right, the 'New to Twitter? Sign up' form is visible, featuring input fields for 'Username or email', 'Password', 'Full name', and 'Email', along with a 'Sign in' button, a 'Remember me' checkbox, and a 'Forgot password?' link. At the bottom of the form is a prominent orange 'Sign up for Twitter' button.

- 2 Enter your full name, email address, and a password.
- 3 Click 'Sign up for Twitter'.

- 4 Next you will create your username or choose one suggested by Twitter.

Join Twitter today.

Full name

Jane Doe

✓ Name looks great.

Email address

janedoe19@gmail.com

✓ We will email you a confirmation.

Create a password

.....

✓ Password is perfect!

Choose your username

JMDoe3

✓ Username is available.
You can change it later.

Suggestions:

☒ Keep me signed-in on this computer.

☒ Tailor Twitter based on my recent website visits. [Learn more.](#)

By clicking the button, you agree to the terms below:

These Terms of Service ("Terms") govern your access to and use of the services, including our various websites, SMS, APIs, email notifications,

Printable versions:

[Terms of Service](#) · [Privacy Policy](#) · [Cookie Use](#)

Create my account

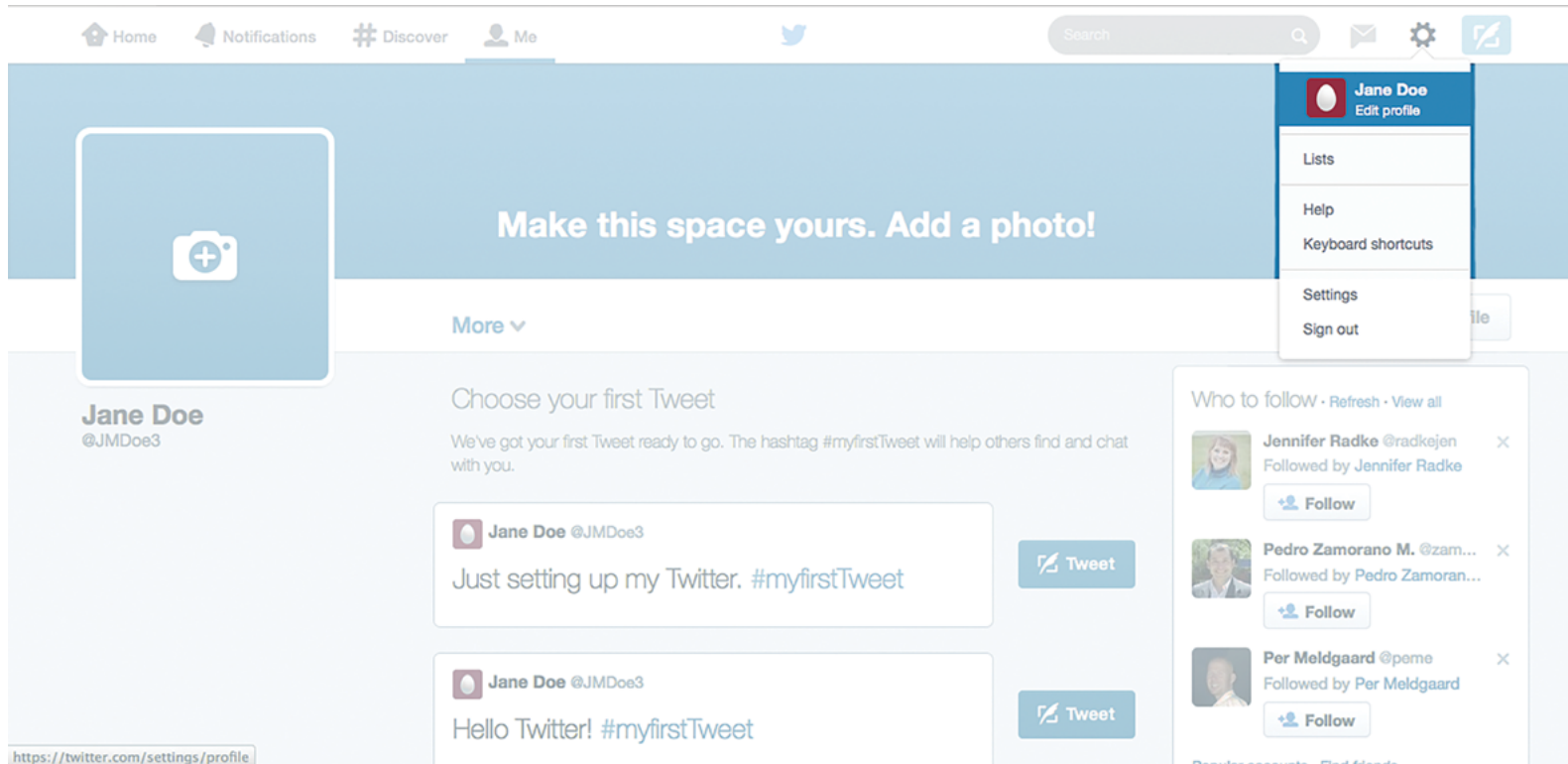
- 5 Click 'Create my account.'

- 6 You're almost done! Twitter will send a confirmation email to the address you entered during sign up. The email will contain a link. Click that link in order to confirm your account.

How-to customize your Twitter profile

Adding a profile and header photo

- 1 Go to your Profile settings.



- 2 Click the 'Change photo' button to change your profile photo. (This photo is your identity on Twitter and appears with your Tweets.) You'll be given the option to upload a photo or take a photo with your webcam. (You may be prompted to allow Twitter access to use your webcam. To do so, click 'Allow'.)

- ③ To change your header photo, click the 'Change header' button.
- ④ You can position and size the photo(s). Once satisfied with how they appear click 'Apply'.
- ⑤ A prompt will let you know that your photo(s) have been successfully published to your profile.

Note: Photos can be in any of the following formats: JPG, GIF, or PNG. (Twitter does not support animated GIFs.) Recommended dimensions for profile photos are 400×400 pixels. Recommended dimensions for header photos are 1500×500 pixels.

Updating your name, location, website, and bio

Information you provide here appears on your public profile, search results, and beyond.

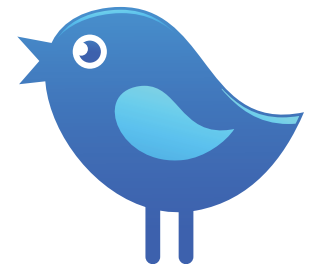
- ① On your Profile settings page (where you just got done uploading a profile picture and header photo), you'll see options to edit your name, location, website, and bio.
- ② Make the desired changes to your information.
- ③ Click 'Save changes'. Once you change your theme you'll be ready to start tweeting!

Name
Enter your real name, so people you know can recognize you.

Location
Where in the world are you?

Website
Have a homepage or a blog? Put the address here.

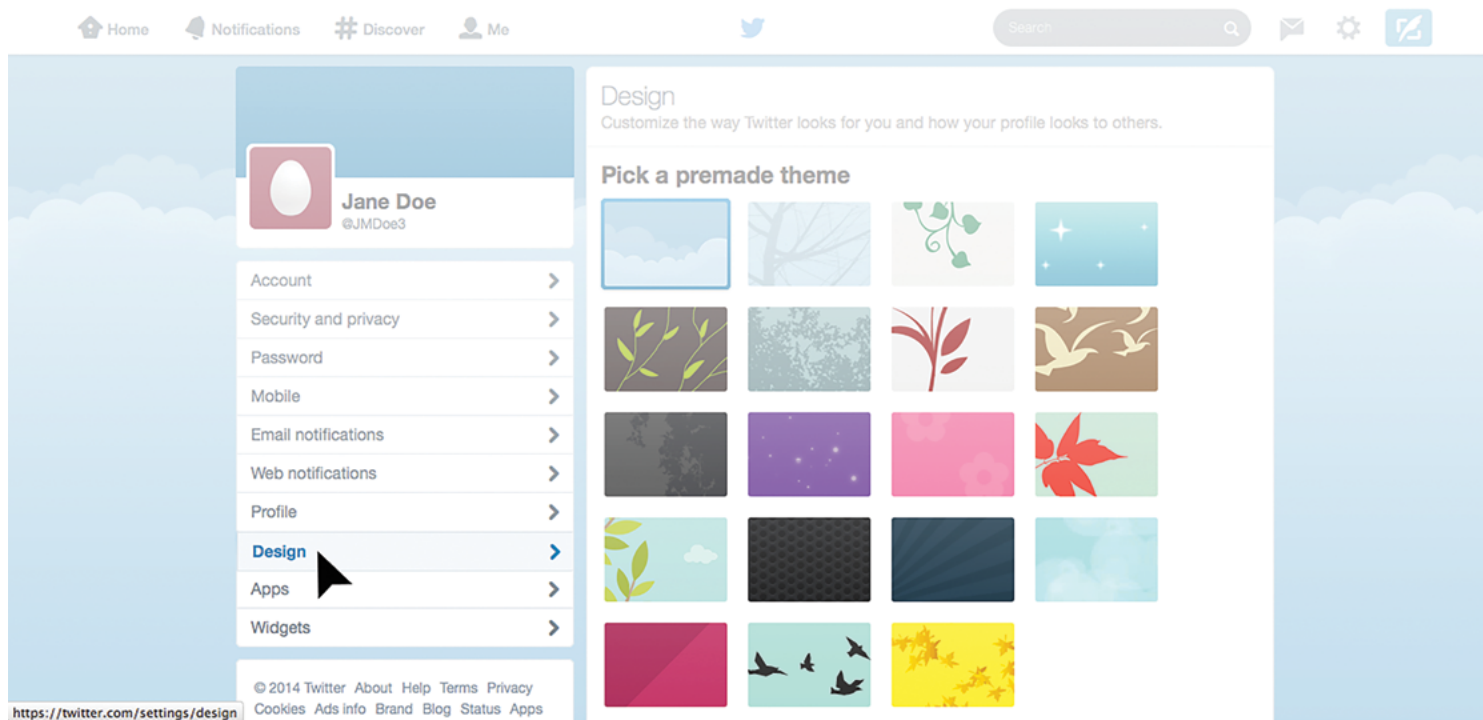
Bio
About yourself in 160 characters or less. 160



Changing your Twitter theme

Your theme is how Twitter will look for others when they view your profile and how your profile looks to you.

- 1 Choose the 'Design' option from the left menu.

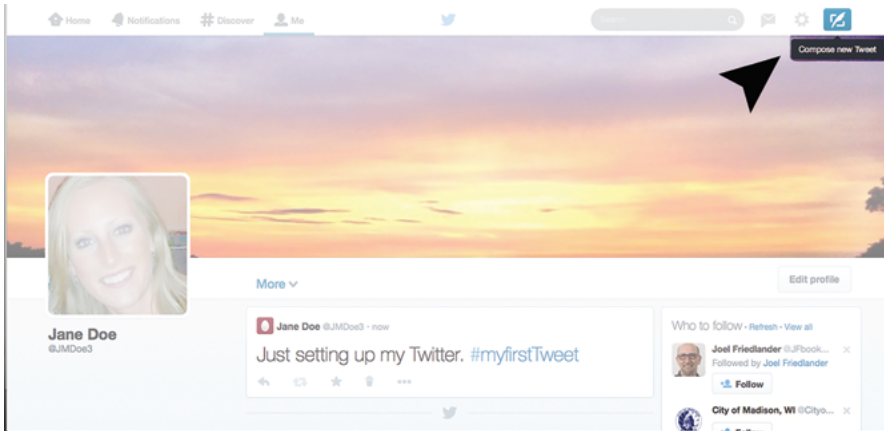


- 2 Choose a pre-made theme or create a custom theme.

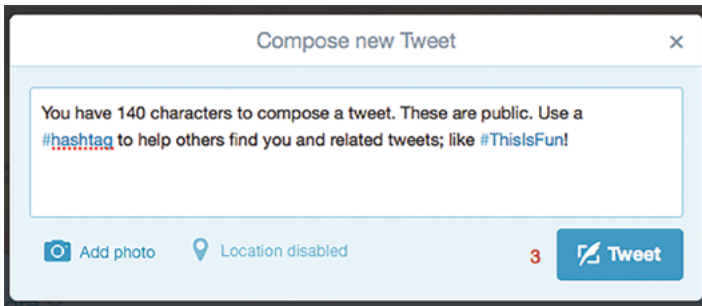
3 With a custom theme you can choose a background image, a background color, and a theme color. Play around with these options to see what looks best. Some people even promote their book by include the cover photo as their background image.

Composing your first Tweet

- 1 Click the 'compose new Tweet' button in the top navigation bar.



- 2 Make sure your update is no more than 140 characters. Twitter will count the characters for you. (See the red 3 in the image below? That is the character count and is warning that only 3 characters remain.)



- 3 Click the 'Tweet' button to post the tweet to your profile.
- 4 Your Tweet will immediately be seen on your timeline and timelines of those who are following you.

8 Academic writing blogs you should be following

► by Libby Becker

[The Thesis Whisperer](#)—Developed ‘Shut up and Write!’ which “turns writing from a solitary, to a social experience.” You can either start a group near you or find a group in your area using their interactive map.

These blogs offer stellar advice for academic writing, from dissertations and journal articles, to book proposals and productivity.

[patter](#)—Pat Thomson covers everything from thesis writing to journal etiquette and rejections, to how to get started on the page. I especially like Pat’s posts on writing for journals.

[PhD2Published](#)—This blog is packed with tips, so many that I’m not even sure where to start. You’ll just have to check it out for yourself.

[Get a Life, PhD](#)—Tanya Golash-Boza offers practical step-by-step advice for various aspects of the writing and publishing process.

[Explorations of Style](#)—Rachael Cayley is a wealth of knowledge for academic writing and productivity.

[The Chronicle of Higher Education](#)—The ‘Advice’ section offers academics advice for all facets of academia, but if you scroll almost to the bottom you’ll find the heading, ‘Page Proof.’ Focus is on academic writing and book proposals; all are written by Rachel Toor.

[PhD Talk](#)—Tips not only include those on writing and motivation, but also on surviving as a PhD student. Eva Lantsoght will draw you in with her down-to-earth personality and sound advice.

[James Hayton, PhD](#)—James Hayton has a vast archive of articles, many of which I’m sure you’ll find to be practical, easy to follow, and, of course, helpful.

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Packed with how-tos, tips & strategies for textbook & academic writers

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